



SENIOR UPDATE



STATE SENATOR

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Greetings!

As our long-awaited summer arrives in northern Michigan, I want to provide you with a legislative report on several issues that may be of interest to you.

As you know, these are challenging times in our state. I want to assure you that my Senate Republican colleagues and I are committed to reshaping Michigan's economic climate and restructuring the way government does business so essential services are protected and tax dollars are spent wisely and efficiently.

As chair of the Senior Citizens and Veterans Affairs Committee in the Senate, I have been given a unique opportunity to work on policy which directly impacts seniors. The committee has heard testimony from advocate groups, including AARP and the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, as we develop policies important to seniors.

It is an honor to serve you and the residents of the 37th district in the Michigan Senate. I welcome your thoughts and concerns so I may better represent northern Michigan.

Best wishes,

Jason Allen
State Senator
37th District

***"We are intent on enacting
real and reasonable reforms
to move Michigan toward
economic recovery."***

— State Senator Jason Allen



IMPROVING long-term care

Sometimes it's difficult to know where to go, who to ask, or what to say to find out about all the long-term care options available. A bill to help make the process easier became law at the beginning of the year. The new law establishes the framework for a Single Point of Entry system that gives people one place to go to get complete and unbiased information about their long-term care options. With this material, people can choose the most appropriate services to meet their needs.

Currently, four pilot programs are operating in the state. You can call 1-866-642-4582 to see if you live in a qualifying area. The Department of Community Health is overseeing and monitoring these sites and is required to report to the Legislature on their effectiveness. The new law is a big step toward making sure that Michigan seniors and persons with disabilities have the tools necessary to make informed choices about the long-term care support services available to them.

Senator Allen backs consumer protection bills

Legislation to protect Michigan residents from the possible theft of their Social Security number has passed the Senate. The bills would allow a register of deeds to remove or obscure all or part of a Social Security number on documents such as real estate titles, recording of deeds, mortgages and instruments of record.

Currently, when someone requests a copy of a document such as a land title, it contains the Social Security number of the title holder. Identity theft is a major concern and there is no reason the numbers should remain on copies provided to the public.

I fully supported this legislation. The bills are the latest in a series of reforms championed by the Michigan Senate to fight identity theft. Yet, even with tough laws in place, it's important to take steps to protect your identity. Remember to destroy or shred anything with your Social Security number on it before you throw it away. And never provide your Social Security number over the Internet or telephone.

Senator Allen reminds seniors... summer tax deferment income threshold raised for 2007

Past Senate legislation signed into law raises the income threshold to defer the due date of summer property taxes up to \$40,000 this year. Eligible Michigan residents 62 years and older can defer the payment of their summer taxes until February 15 without penalty or interest. To do so, **the property owner must file a deferment form with their city or township treasurer by September 15.**

I've heard from a number of people that the summer property tax can impose financial hardship, especially for those on a fixed income. Many seniors use their state or federal income tax refund to pay the tax and find the deferment helpful. To obtain a deferment form, contact your local treasurer or go to www.michigan.gov/documents/homestead1_2541_7.pdf.

September 15

Senator Allen supports MI HEART

Studies have shown that Michigan ranks as one of the unhealthiest states in the nation and that unhealthy behaviors account for up to 30 percent of our state's health care costs. On top of that, an estimated 1.1 million Michigan residents are uninsured. To help meet these challenges, Senate Republicans have developed a comprehensive reform package, called MI-HEART (Michigan Helping Ensure Affordable and Reliable Treatment). MI-HEART aims to provide affordable, basic health care coverage options, help people lead healthier lives, and contain the growth of health care costs.

Some of the major parts of the MI-HEART package include:

- A requirement to put in place healthy behavior incentives and provider pay-for-performance measures in the Medicaid program.
- Creation of the MI-HEART Exchange – a marketplace for the purchase of affordable, basic health care coverage, with a subsidized program for eligible, low-income individuals.
- The opportunity for parents with family coverage to continue that coverage for their children to age 26, even if that child is no longer considered a dependent.
- Creation of the Michigan Get Outdoors Fitness Award to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Many seniors have shared with me their concerns about affordable health care - for themselves, their children and their grandchildren. I believe the MI HEART plan will help individuals and families better manage their health and health care costs.



Senator Jason Allen’s Senior Hotlines

Here is a list of toll-free numbers to call (at no charge) for facts on a variety of subjects of interest to seniors and their families. Note: numbers are subject to change.

Alzheimer's Association	1-800-272-3900
American Cancer Society	1-800-227-2345
American Council of the Blind	1-800-424-8666
American Diabetes Association	1-800-232-3472
American Parkinson's Disease Association	1-800-223-2732
Arthritis Foundation	1-800-283-7800
Auto Repair Complaints	1-800-292-4204
Cancer Information Service	1-800-422-6237
Christopher Reeves Paralysis Foundation	1-800-225-0292
Consumer Protection Agency	1-877-765-8388
Do Not Call List (Sign Up)	1-888-382-1222
Elder Abuse Helpline	1-800-996-6228
Energy Assistance	1-800-292-5650
Hospice	1-800-331-1620

Lawyer Referral.....	1-800-968-0738
Legal Hotline for Seniors	1-800-347-5297
MDOT Pothole Hot Line	1-888-296-4546
Medicare Appeals (Hospital Discharge)	1-800-365-5899
Medicare Inquiry	1-800-633-4227
Medicare/Medicaid Assist. Program	1-800-803-7174
Michigan Parkinson's Foundation	1-800-852-9781
Michigan Long Term Care Ombudsman Program	1-866-485-9393
Patient Abuse & Healthcare Fraud.....	1-800-242-2873
Social Security	1-800-772-1213
Taxpayer Assistance (State)	1-800-827-4000
Taxpayer Information (Federal)	1-800-829-1040
Utilities (Public Service Commission)	1-800-292-9555
Veterans' Information & Assistance	1-800-827-1000
Senator Jason Allen.....	1-866-525-5637